



Focus on Washington's Electronic Product Recycling Program

from Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program

Washington law makers recently passed a bill requiring computer and television manufacturers to provide consumer-convenient recycling of their covered electronic products throughout our state. Covered electronic products are computers, televisions, computer monitors, portable, or laptop computers used by households, small governments, small businesses, and charities. Manufacturers must make these services available to these groups by January 1, 2009.

The Legislature directed the state Department of Ecology (Ecology) to design and oversee this products recycling program. This law defines a process and confers the duty to recycle electronic products or "e-waste" – used and unwanted personal computers, monitors, televisions, and laptop or portable computers.

Electronic wastes pose risks

From the year 2003 until 2010, Ecology estimates more than 4.5 million computer processing units, 3.5 million cathode ray tube monitors, and 1.5 million flat panel monitors will become obsolete in Washington state. Improperly disposed, these items would cause significant environmental harm.

The purpose of the state law is to reduce the types and amounts of toxic materials going into solid waste landfills from e-waste, and to conserve valuable resources. The first step will ensure that electronic products manufacturers account for resources combined in the products they market, even after the buyer discards them. This program puts our market-based economy to work for the environment. It pushes manufacturers to compete with themselves and with each other to pursue ever more efficient supply and production systems, to "green" their product designs, and to lower product distribution and e-waste collection costs.

Product labeling

Starting January 1, 2007, any manufacturer (or assembler) of computers, televisions, or monitors must label its product with a brand name. Unbranded products may not be sold in or into Washington.

Manufacturer registration required

Manufacturers of covered electronic products with legal ownership of the brand name must register with Ecology before offering, selling, or having a retailer sell their products in Washington State. We will record all brand names and post a list on Ecology's web site. To generate the product-label list, Ecology will use information provided through manufacturer registration.

All electronic-product manufacturers must register with Ecology annually. They must also seek Ecology's approval of their take-back/recycling plan that provides collection points within each county throughout the state, supported by transportation services to processing facilities. These services must be provided at no additional cost to the consumer, beyond the initial purchase price for the product.

Collector, transporter and processor registration

All collectors, transporters and processors who offer electronic product recycling services must register with Ecology. Ecology will post a current list of registered electronic product recycling service companies on our web site.

Recycling plans

All manufacturers must participate in an approved recycling plan by January 1, 2009. Registered manufacturers must either participate in the standard plan developed by the Materials Management and Finance Authority (the Authority), or they must petition Ecology for approval to operate under an independent plan (an authorized party). All plans must describe how the manufacturer(s) will provide convenient collection services in both urban and rural areas.

Collection services

Collection services must provide a place where people may bring their used computers and televisions to a collection center for recycling. The services must be offered to households, charities, school districts, small businesses, and small governments. Large businesses and large governments must provide and pay for their own system to recycle electronic products used by their employees.

Rule-making process

In April 2006, Ecology began developing a rule to implement the new electronic product recycling law, **Chapter 70.95N RCW - Washington Electronic Product Recycling Program**. The first phase of rule-making designs and sets up the Program's structure; they include -

- registration requirements for all covered electronic product manufacturers,
- five-tiered administrative fees,
- registration of covered electronic product collection and transport service companies,
- electronic products labeling requirements, and
- defined violations and penalties for noncompliance.

A second phase of rule-making will focus on all other requirements associated with the program. Ecology encourages you to offer comments and suggestions throughout the rule-making process.

Timeline

July 1, 2006:	Chapter 70.95N RCW Electronic Product Recycling – effective date
August 2, 2006:	Publication of phase one draft rules
July 19 through September 7, 2006:	Public comment period on phase one draft rules
September 2006:	Phase two rule-making begins
October 25, 2006:	Anticipated adoption date for phase one rules
November 15, 2006:	Ecology sends administrative fee billing statements to manufacturers
January 1, 2007:	Each qualifying covered-electronic-product manufacturer has registered and paid fees (received by Ecology)

January 1, 2007:	Only labeled electronic products are sold in or into Washington. (Retailers may exhaust existing stocks of noncompliant products but may not acquire more.)
April 2007:	Ecology proposes the language for phase two rule-making. It includes requirements for approved recycling plans, standards for processors, and ways to meet other requirements of the law.
June 1, 2007:	Ecology notifies each manufacturer of its preliminary return share for recycling electronic products during the first program year.
August 1, 2007:	Ecology publishes the final return shares for the first program year.
August 2007:	Ecology adopts the phase two rule language.
February 1, 2008:	All initial independent plans and the initial standard plan are submitted to Ecology. Ecology either approves or denies any independent plans within 90 days, and lists with the response specific recommendations for improvement.
January 1, 2009:	All recycling plans are implemented and fully operational.
March 1, 2010:	Each year, the Authority and each authorized party files with Ecology a report describing the results of their recycling program for the preceding year.

More information:

Contact Jay Shepard at wa-recycles-electronics@ecy.wa.gov or 360/407-7040.

- The Washington Electronics Products Recycling Act:
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70.95N&full=true>
- Department of Ecology's Electronic Product Recycling web site:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eproductrecycle>
- Sign up for the WA-Recycles-Electronics e-mail list to receive updates:
<http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/wa-recycles-electronics.html>

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